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POLICY BRIEFING

Increasing Interest in Infrastructures for Peace

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Abstract

A global network has been established to enhance infrastructures for peace internationally in 2011. Most countries lack the capacities and structures to deal adequately with ongoing and potential violent conflict. These peace structures have a real impact: several times in the last two decades, they have proven to be effective tools for preventing or reducing violence, as in South Africa prior to the elections in 1994 and during recent elections in Ghana and Kenya. There is an increasing interest in infrastructures for peace, which is important because experts expect an increase in violent conflict.

The article describes some experiences of peace structures in South Africa, Ghana and Kenya; gives a definition of a peace infrastructure; a rationale for advancing it and the need for a multi-stakeholder dialogue on infrastructures for peace. It draws some conclusions and also proposes some research questions.

Keywords

infrastructures for peace, long-term peacebuilding, peacebuilding, conflict prevention

1. INTRODUCTION

In June 2011, the High Commission of Ghana to the United Kingdom (UK) hosted a meeting on infrastructures for peace in cooperation with the Global Peace Building Strategy. One of the outcomes of this meeting was the establishment of an International Steering Group to enhance infrastructures for peace internationally. The governments of Ghana, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, and South Sudan joined it directly, together with the United Nations Development Programme-Bureau for Crisis, Prevention and Recovery (UNDP-BCPR).

Establishing infrastructures for peace could be a useful strategy for those countries lacking the capacities, mechanisms and structures to deal adequately with ongoing and potentially violent conflicts.

Establishing a national infrastructure for peace could include:

- adopting a cooperative, problem-solving approach to conflict, based on dialogue and non-violence, which includes all stakeholders;
- developing institutional mechanisms, appropriate to each country's culture, which promote and manage this approach at local, district and national levels.

Enhancing infrastructures for peace is urgent, because violent conflict is a widespread, global problem, affecting around 90 countries.

Peace structures have been shown to work, as the following cases illustrate:

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South Africa

South Africa successfully pioneered a peace structure during the troubled years preceding elections in 1994, building mechanisms at local, regional and national levels that effectively stopped the escalation of violence.

Ghana

A National Peace Council was established in Ghana in 2005 which played a major role at national and local levels in ensuring peaceful elections in 2008 and helped lead to a smooth transfer of power.

Kenya

In Kenya, highly destructive, violent conflicts took place in the Wajir district on the border with Somalia and Ethiopia over a period of many years. Led by civil society actors, the Wajir Peace and Development Committee brought peace to the region towards the end of the 1990s, leading to the use of the model in other districts in the northern provinces of Kenya. When post-election violence broke out in Kenya at the end of 2007, there was far less violence where there was a District Peace Council than in those districts without one.

The process of building infrastructures for peace has been advanced and expanded in many countries by the invaluable work of the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery.

These three cases demonstrate how peace structures before and after elections prevented violent conflicts or reduced violence. Recent years have demonstrated many times how elections were contested, triggering the potential for violent conflict. The post-election violence in Kenya in 2007/08 was a wake-up call for the international community: if this can happen in Kenya, a country perceived as stable and peaceful, it can happen in many more countries.

Often situations are polarized along political or ethnic divides. There is a need for mechanisms and structures that bridge these divides and respond fast if violence erupts.

Experts expect an increase in conflicts. Therefore, peace structures or long-lasting mechanisms and structures for adequately dealing with conflicts in society, have to be established urgently.

These peace structures are inexpensive and cost-effective. In the last decade, the UN has contributed to the establishment of infrastructures for peace in ten countries, and given support for national capacities to prevent conflicts and build peace. The funds provided are, on average, 2 to 3 million US dollars per country.

Outside interventions are frequently ineffective and very costly. Thus, we have to support and strengthen national capacities to deal with their potential for conflicts.

Responses to conflicts are often reactive, based on law and order, implemented from top to bottom and aimed more at managing the conflict than solving it. The infrastructures for peace approach, on the other hand, is proactive, participatory, inclusive and transformative. It is positive in character and stimulates working together. It makes the connection between the capacity and the conflict: people trained in conflict resolution and transformation are given a role in transforming the conflict. Without peace structures, those people often do not have a role or function to assist in solving the conflicts in their country.

This approach includes all stakeholders at all levels. Peace and peacebuilding are complex processes and need a platform where different stakeholders meet. This approach acknowledges that sustainable peace needs a collaborative institutional framework between state and non-state actors.

There is an increasing interest in infrastructures for peace. Several countries have recently established Ministries of Peace or infrastructures for peace, with peace structures at different levels of society, involving the main stakeholders.

2. CONTEXT

Many countries have a great potential for violence, are locked in permanent stalemate or are liable to return to violent conflict in the coming years. If one considers indicators such as those used in the Failed States Index, some ninety countries are facing these serious problems. The current structures and mechanisms in many countries are not adequate to deal with those tensions and conflicts.

Development in itself generates new conflicts, by changing economic and power relations which can come on top of already existing root causes of conflicts in many countries, such as land, resources, ethnicity, exclusion, chieftaincy, to name a few.

In the cases of Ghana and Kenya described in section 3, the rationale for establishing a peace structure in regions that were neglected by the central government, was the fact that the violent conflicts broke out because the central government did not deliver justice or security.

Experts expect an increase in violent conflicts: "Although there is solid evidence that efforts by the United Nations and our partners have made an impact in reducing the number of conflicts around the world, new dangers are on the horizon. Competition for scarce resources is a powerful driver of conflict, especially when added to existing grievances between groups. As a result of the economic downturn, climate change and the growing depletion

of resources, from arable land to water and oil, disputes within and between states may become more common in the future."[1]

Another factor that has regularly contributed to violent conflict in recent years is electoral violence. Fair and peaceful elections have become a benchmark for a stable government, but elections are also a focal point for all the tension within a society, and furthermore, fraud and corruption can make the situation worse. Elections can therefore be contested.

Besides the traditional, technical electoral assistance, a longer term package of assistance and support is needed to build infrastructures for peace, as the UN has done in recent years in several countries, thereby strengthening national capacities for conflict prevention and transformation. For example, during the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007/2008, far less violence happened in those districts with a peace council, than in the regions without such a council.

3. EXAMPLES OF INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE

One of the first countries to begin constructing an infrastructure for peace was South Africa.

South Africa

Local peace committees (LPCs) were a product of the National Peace Accord signed in 1991 between the principal protagonists in South Africa's conflict. The main reason for the accord was the escalation of violence in the country, and it was hoped that formation of LPCs would reduce the violence. The main objectives of the committees were to create trust and reconciliation between community leaders, to prevent violence and to resolve disputes. In each region of the country, regional peace committees were established in addition to local ones.

Observers agree that, in the two years prior to the historic 1994 elections, this peace infrastructure contributed substantively to containing the spiral of violence occurring at that time. While the LPCs were unable to prevent all violent incidents, it is widely agreed that the situation would have been far graver if they had not existed.[2]

Now, relying in part on the success of the South African model, the governments of Ghana and Kenya are pioneering the implementation of their own infrastructure for peace.

Ghana

In Ghana, 23 major conflicts were recorded in the three northern regions of the country between 1980 and 2002. Many community-based and inter-ethnic conflicts appeared intractable, in part because the justice system was not functioning at full capacity and many judicial cases remained unaddressed. When violence erupted, official Commissions of Inquiry were established, but their recommendations were not implemented and several ongoing conflicts remained unresolved.

After the slaying of the King of Dagbon and many of his elders in 2002, the regional government established the Northern Peace Advocacy Council as a mediation and conflict resolution mechanism to deal with the issues of trust among the factions and restore confidence and relationships. During that time, the United Nations Development Programme was asked to provide advice and thus a process was initiated to establish a peace infrastructure.

With the success of this council, the government decided to explore the possibility of extending the peace council concept to the rest of the country. A National Peace Council (NPC) was established in Ghana in 2005. This council played a major role, at national and local levels, in ensuring peaceful elections in 2008 and helped lead to a smooth transfer of power through a series of meetings with stakeholders that pro-actively diffused tensions.

In March 2011, the National Peace Council Bill was unanimously adopted by Parliament. The functions of the NPC are:
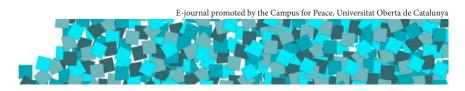
- to harmonize and coordinate conflict prevention, management, resolution and build sustainable peace through networking and coordination;
- to strengthen capacities in relation to the objectives;
- to facilitate the amicable resolution of conflicts through mediation and other connected processes;
- to monitor, report and offer indigenous perspectives and solutions to conflicts in the country;
- to promote understanding about values of reconciliation, tolerance, confidence building, mediation and dialogue as responses to conflict.

The NPC is independent and has a board, consisting of thirteen eminent members appointed by the President in consultation with the Council of State. Six are representatives from religious bodies.

The NPC also has regional and district peace councils, with thirteen members, whose activities involve, among others, public education, sensitizing and raising awareness of conflict indicators within the region.

1 UN Security Council (2009).
2 Literature on infrastructures for peace in South Africa: Odendaal (2011); Ball & Spies (1998); Collin Marks (2000)

Executive Secretaries operate in each region and district. They are the secretaries of the peace councils with experience in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.[3]

Kenya

Kenya provides a fascinating example of a bottom-up process to establish a peace structure. The process started in 1993 with an initiative by a group of women of the Wajir district of Kenya, bordering Somalia and Ethiopia. There was a highly destructive cycle of violent conflict in that region, combined with an insufficient governance presence, resulting in the failure of state institutions to regulate conflict, provide security and promote development in these regions.

The initiative consisted of civil society actors working together to sensitize the population to the need and possibility for peace. They engaged the elders of different clans and set up a mediation process between them. In this process, civil society actors worked with and involved representatives of formal authority, particularly the District Commissioner and a Member of Parliament. After some time, some formalization was needed and the peace initiatives were integrated in the District Development Committee, becoming the Wajir Peace and Development Committee, with the District Commissioner as chairperson.

The success of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee in bringing and maintaining peace in the district led to the spread of the model to other districts in the northern part of the country. In 2001, the government established a National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management which, with the Office of the President, embarked on a process for the development of a national policy in 2004. The National Policy on Peace Building and Conflict Management, published by the Office of the President at the end of September 2009, included lessons learned from the post-election violence in late 2007 and early 2008.

Following this post-election violence, the National Accord and Reconciliation Act of 2008 recommended the establishment of district peace committees in all of Kenya's districts. When post-election violence broke out in Kenya, far less violence occurred in the districts where there was a district peace council than in those districts without such a council.

Further progress has been made by a recent constitutional referendum and the adoption of a new Constitution in the autumn of 2010.

Prior to the referendum, the UNDP provided support for successful national efforts to reach a political agreement on the new draft constitution and helped government and civil society implement an early warning and response system – the Uwiano Platform – that prevented over a hundred potential incidents of violence in the volatile Rift Valley region alone. LPCs were strengthened in all of the country's districts and played a critical peacemaking role during the referendum. All of this was accomplished without a single incident of violence thanks to the role of the committees.[4]

Costa Rica

In 1948, Costa Rica became the first country to formally abolish its armed forces; the Constitution forbids a standing military. In 1980 Costa Rica established the United Nations University for Peace, approved by the General Assembly of the UN.

Together with the United Kingdom, Costa Rica proposed a UN resolution for an International Day of Peace in 1981. In 2001, a resolution was adopted for peace to be commemorated on 21 September every year. The International Day of Peace is now celebrated around the world.

In September 2009, the Costa Rican legislature passed a law changing the name of the country's justice ministry to the Ministry of Justice and Peace. The new Ministry is working with NGOs to implement a national plan for peace promotion.

The Philippines

In 1986, the People Power Revolution in the Philippines led to the fall of the Marcos dictatorship. Subsequently, peace talks with all rebel forces were initiated, the peace process as a government policy was formalized and the Office of the Peace Commissioner established under the Office of the President.

Under President Ramos, the post of Presidential Adviser on the peace process with Cabinet rank was created and charged with managing the comprehensive peace process, assisted by a full time Secretariat. The government established panels for negotiations with different rebel groups and several consultations took place with members of civil society.[5]

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3 Literature on infrastructures for peace in Ghana: Ghana Ministry of the Interior (2006); National Peace Council Bill, Ghana (2011); Ojielo (2010); Odendaal (2011); Bombande (2007)..

4 Literature on infrastructures for peace in Kenya: National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (final version, June 2011); UN Development Programme (2008); Odendaal (2011); Kut (2007).

5 Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, http://www.opapp.gov.ph/.

4. DEFINING INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE

Establishing a national infrastructure for peace may include:

- Adoption of a cooperative, problem-solving approach to conflict based on dialogue and non-violence, which includes all stakeholders;
- Development of institutional mechanisms, appropriate to each country's culture, which promote and manage this approach at local, district and national levels.

Such an infrastructure can help a fragile, divided, transitional or post-conflict society build and sustain peace by:

- managing recurring conflicts over land, natural resources or contested elections;
- finding internal solutions, to specific conflicts and tensions through mediated consensus or multi-stakeholder dialogue;
- negotiating and implementing new governing arrangements, such as new constitutional provisions, in an inclusive and consensual manner.

The UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, in close cooperation with the UN Department of Political Affairs, currently supports the establishment of such infrastructures and conducts dialogue leading to the development of peace infrastructures in approximately thirty countries.[6]

Essential components of peace infrastructures include:

- **National, district and local peace councils** comprised of trusted and highly respected persons of integrity who can bridge political divides and who possess competence and experience in transforming conflicts;
- **National peace platforms** for consultation, collaboration and coordination of peace issues by relevant actors and stakeholders;
- **A government bureau, department or ministry of peacebuilding**;
- Passing **legislative measures** to create national infrastructures for peace with appropriate budgets;
- Expanding the **capacities of national peacebuilding institutions**, related government departments, peace councils and relevant groups of civil society organizations (CSOs);
- Renewing and using **traditional perspectives** and methodologies for conflict resolution;
- Promoting a **shared vision for society** and for a **culture of peace**.

These components are not obligatory, but are amongst possible pillars for building infrastructures for peace.

5. RATIONALE FOR ADVANCING INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE

These processes are timely and urgent.

Most countries lack structures, capacities and mechanisms to deal adequately with ongoing and potentially violent conflicts.

Violent conflict is widespread and a global problem.

Inter-ethnic tensions, stalemates on key issues, insufficiently defined and changing borders, and rapid transitions with violent tensions are taking place in around 90 countries with the potential for escalating into political violence or relapsing into violent conflict. There are increasing indications of immediate and long-term conflicts due to competition for scarce resources, contested elections, energy deficits, climate change issues, migration, displacement and countless other factors. These factors are part and parcel of our civilization and will not go away on their own. They require dialogue and relevant mechanisms so that they can be skillfully and non-violently resolved.

Evidence demonstrates that peace structures work.

Mechanisms for peacebuilding have been successful in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana and several other countries. As noted, in the recent elections in Ghana and Kenya the existence of these structures aided significantly in preventing and reducing violent conflict.

Such mechanisms are inexpensive and cost-effective.

In the last decade, the UN has contributed to some ten countries for the establishment of infrastructures for

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6 Kumar (forthcoming).

peace and has offered supported for building national capacities on preventing conflicts and building peace. The amount spent is on average 2 to 3 million US dollars per country.

Compared to the costs of civil war and the related displacement, relocation, reintegration, demilitarization, reverses in development and other consequences of armed conflict, the costs of infrastructures for peace are minute and ultimately offer tremendous rewards.

Outside intervention is frequently ineffective.

External interventions, including humanitarian, are difficult, slow and very costly. In contrast, using infrastructures that are in place within a country can be far more effective and timely, allowing societies to manage their own problems on their own terms, so promoting long term stability.

6. THE COST OF PREVENTION

Strengthening infrastructures for peace by equipping national and local actors to resolve conflicts, prevent violence and build consensus over contentious issues in an inclusive and credible manner is an efficient and cost-effective approach.

For Example, Kenya's leading business association estimated economic losses from post-election violence in 2008 at 3.6 billion US dollars. In contrast, the 2010 constitutional referendum, plagued by similar inter-ethnic tensions, did not see any violence. A UNDP-supported violence prevention effort that identified and pre-empted nearly 150 incidents of violence, and helped political parties reach consensus on the draft constitution before the vote, cost only about 5 million US dollars in comparison. Similarly, the UN Flash Appeal estimated the recovery costs from inter-ethnic violence in mid-2010 in Kyrgyzstan at 71 million US dollars, while regional and UN efforts to restore political and inter-ethnic confidence cost approximately 6 million US dollars. Subsequently, the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections in 2010, both expected to be plagued by significant turbulence, transpired peacefully. For 2011, the IMF forecast a 4-5% growth rate for the country, significantly higher than in recent years.

According to the Ghana Investment Promotion Council, direct foreign investment in the county jumped 90% between mid-2008 and mid-2009. The intervening variable was the peaceful national poll in December 2008. The National Peace Council, with approximately 2 million US dollars financial support from the UNDP, played a crucial, internal mediation role in averting expected turbulence. Expectations of violence had depressed investment prior to the poll.[7]

7. NEED FOR A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE

Sometimes a government takes a decision to establish an infrastructure for peace. However, more often, local actors have taken the initiative in remote regions, neglected by central government and where local or regional civil society tends to use traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. They established their own platform or Advisory Committee on Dialogue on Peace, and reached out to get officials involved. This happened in the Wajir region in Kenya in the 1990s and a similar process took place in the northern part of Ghana. These bottom-up approaches seem to work best because they have a replication effect: from remote regions in a country, the peace infrastructures can spread throughout the country and ultimately become national policy.

Both in Kenya and Ghana, intense consultation processes have taken place to involve many stakeholders at national, regional, district and local levels.

The process of building infrastructures for peace has been advanced and expanded in many countries by the invaluable work of the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and their joint efforts in conjunction with the UN Department of Political Affairs programmes on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention in several countries.[8]

A dialogue between the different stakeholders is a condition for establishing an infrastructure for peace at the national level.

At the international level, however, very little dialogue was taking place between the different actors: governments, the UN and civil society organizations. With the growing interest in this approach, it is crucial to further enhance and structure a dialogue on infrastructures for peace at the international level. This is a relatively new approach and a lot can be learnt from other countries' efforts just as Ghana and Kenya have learnt a lot from each other.

A first attempt at a dialogue of this nature was made by UNDP/BCPR, in cooperation with the West Africa Network on Peacebuilding, the Nairobi Peace Initiative – Africa and the Global Partnership for the Prevention

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7   Facts and figures presented by Dr. Chetan Kumar (BCPR) at the meeting in London on 15 June 2011 where the International Steering Group to enhance infrastructures for peace internationally was established.

8   See note 6.

of Armed Conflict. UNDP organized, together with those partners, an experience-sharing seminar on building infrastructures for peace in Naivasha, Kenya, in February 2010, where representatives of governments, political parties, civil society and UN country teams from 14 African countries met. It was found that exchanging country experiences proved very useful for the participants, especially the dialogue that occurred between different actors.[9]

The next step was to structure such a process in enhancing infrastructures for peace internationally.

In June 2011, the High Commission of Ghana to the UK organized, together with the Global Peace Building Strategy,[10] a meeting on infrastructures for peace in London, where high-level representatives from the governments of Ghana, Kenya, the Philippines and Costa Rica, together with the BCPR, presented their efforts on infrastructures for peace. It was unanimously agreed that international cooperation on this issue between different stakeholders was needed. A Steering Group of countries that will enhance the process of establishing infrastructures for peace internationally was established; Ghana, Kenya, South Sudan, Kyrgyzstan, and the BCPR joined the initiative directly. In this body, governments and local groups cooperate, in close collaboration with the UN and international peacebuilding NGOs and networks.

The main tasks of the Steering Group are the international exchange of experiences and best practices, reaching out to a broader community and advocacy work. In the next section some ideas are shared about the advocacy work. In the following section, suggestions are given on analysis of best practices and developing proposals for further research. In this vein, another task of the Steering Group is the preparation and dissemination of materials to raise more awareness on infrastructures for peace.

Some stakeholders have complementary capacities for implementing some tasks. For example, the work of peace and development advisors is a crucial task of the UN because they often have the neutrality and legitimacy in a country to advise and facilitate peace processes. Civil society actors are other stakeholders who can contribute by organizing exchanges of experience, reaching out with materials and engaging in advocacy work.

It is an important step forward that there now exists a formal international network that wants to enhance infrastructures for peace globally, composed of different actors: governments, the UN and CSOs.

Much can be gained from a joint effort at national and international levels by various stakeholders fulfilling parallel yet complementary tasks. The newly established steering group aims to contribute to this end.

8. ADVOCACY

There is a recent history of advocacy for infrastructures for peace that can serve as a basis for moving forward. At the first Standing Conference on Stability, Security and Development in Durban, in 2002, African leaders signed a resolution in which they committed to take responsibility for setting up national institutions to manage conflict in partnership with their civil societies.

In his 2006 Progress Report on the 2001 report *Prevention of Armed Conflict*, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, stated the importance of creating sustainable national infrastructures for peace:

> "Essentially, the aim should be the creation of a sustainable national infrastructure for peace that allows societies and their governments to resolve conflicts internally and with their own skills, institutions and resources." [11]

The April 2009 Report of the Secretary-General of the UN on Enhancing Mediation to the Security Council, under the heading "Strengthening National/Local capacity for conflict prevention/resolution", indicated:

> "[...] one promising approach is the development of a national architecture for dispute resolution through national, regional and district peace councils to provide mediation and prevent local conflicts from escalating and spreading."[12]

Building on the African Union Resolution and statements such as those in the above-referred reports, the Global Peace Building Strategy and other CSO actors can work with relevant bodies on frameworks and resolutions within regional entities, and relevant UN agencies, to encourage governments to establish national institutions to manage, reduce, prevent and transform conflict, working in partnership with their civil societies.

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9 Background documents for experience-sharing seminar on building infrastructures for peace, Kenya, February 2010.
10 The Global Peace Building Strategy is a strategy intended to systematically address the issue of violent conflict. One of its seven key objectives is facilitating the establishment of infrastructures for peace in ten countries by 2016; www.worldpeacefestival.org.
11 UN (2006), p. 16.
12 See UN Security Council (2009), report note 1, paragraf 52.

9. INCREASING INTEREST IN INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE

There are some early pioneers in the creation of infrastructures for peace, as seen in Costa Rica and the Philippines.

Costa Rica abolished its armed forces in 1948, took several initiatives to enhance peace internationally and established a Ministry of Justice & Peace in 2009.

In 1986, the People Power Revolution in the Philippines led to the fall of the Marcos dictatorship. Subsequently, peace talks with all rebel forces were initiated, the peace process as a government policy was formalized and the Office of the Peace Commissioner was established under the Office of the President.[13]

The last decade has shown a steady increase in interest for peace structures based on local needs.

For example, we have seen many examples of contested elections in recent years. The Post-Election Violence in Kenya in 2007/08 in a country perceived as stable and peaceful has made a great impact on the international community. If this can happen in Kenya, it can happen in many more countries.

Experts expect to see an increase in conflicts globally. At the same time, the structures and mechanisms in place in countries are not prepared for tasks such as responding rapidly to an escalation of violence or having people and institutions with the weight and legitimacy to prevent escalation of violence.

The stories of how Ghana and Kenya successfully prevented or reduced violence by establishing an infrastructure for peace, made an impact in many countries and as a result, many foreign visitors went to Accra and Nairobi for advice.

Costa Rica established its Ministry of Justice and Peace in 2009. South Sudan established a new Ministry for Peace and CPA Implementation;[14] Nepal has a Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction; Togo, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Uganda and Kyrgyzstan are all taking measures to prepare for peace structures.

10. SOME CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

Violent conflict is widespread and a global problem.

Around 90 countries can be identified as facing the prospects of potential violence, prolonged deadlock or a relapse into violent conflict over the next 2-3 years. The extent to which violent conflict is affecting so many countries is highly underestimated. Most of these countries lack the capacity, mechanisms and structures to deal with those conflicts.

A **substantial investment in long-lasting peace structures** to overcome this deficit is urgently needed.

Insider mediators are very important.

The development and application of national and local capacities requires sustained accompaniment, where specialists assist their counterparts in overcoming initial suspicion and hostility by developing relations of trust, then impart skills for negotiation and mediation, and how to apply these skills for this negotiation and mediation, understanding the need for establishing peace structures.

The strengthening of the capacities of insider mediators is very important. Peace and Development advisors of the UN can play these roles and are often seen as insider mediators.

Bottom-up processes are preferred to top-down approaches.

Meaningful experiences with regional peace councils in Wajir (Kenya) and Northern Ghana worked well and helped de-escalate the violence. In both cases, due to the success of the regional peace model, the national governments decided to spread the model throughout the country. Local initiatives are crucial.

Lessons from South Africa and Nepal illustrate that if this is not taken into account, the peace structure will fail.
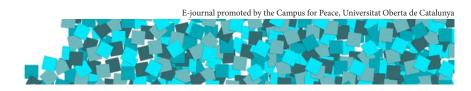
Proven impact

The experiences of South Africa, Ghana and Kenya show how the existence of peace structures prevented or reduced violent conflicts.

A study of local peace councils in a dozen different countries has demonstrated that they can fill a void in dispute resolution in local governance and are particularly effective during transitional periods.[15] The absence or weakness of legitimate local government structures requires a mechanism for facilitating consensus because there is a need to dialogue and create mechanisms for conflict resolution in order to forge consensus between former antagonists and other stakeholders on urgent matters of co-existence at the local level. Local peace councils offer

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13 See http://www.opapp.gov.ph/.
14 CPA is Comprehensive Peace Agreement.
15 Odendaal (2008)

such a mechanism in which relevant matters are discussed in an open, inclusive and participatory manner with the objective of constructing peaceful relations and arriving at consensus.

Need for an international multi-stakeholder dialogue on infrastructures for peace

In addition to local peace structures, dialogue and cooperation between different stakeholders at the national level is essential and is a condition for successful infrastructures for peace.

Different stakeholders have different, often complementary capacities.

At the international level, governments, the United Nations and civil society organizations have different capacities and experiences, which contribute to, and further enhance infrastructures for peace internationally. This is especially relevant to the sharing of experiences, reaching out to a larger community and with advocacy work.

11. SOME CHALLENGES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Relationship between the peace structure and state institutions

Governments sometimes fail in providing justice or security, as the examples of Ghana and Kenya have illustrated. Peace structures need to be independent, but they should not replace government. If the government or a party has too much influence on the peace structure, it can disable it.

The emphasis on the importance of institution-building as a primary peacebuilding activity is growing and is one of the central conclusions of the World Bank World Development Report, 2011: support relevant, legitimate institutions.

Peace structures do not contradict institution building, but rather contribute to the legitimacy of institutions by increasing their capacity to facilitate political dialogue. Peace structures find their own niche in the spectrum of state institutions by offering specialized facilitation and mediation capacity to respond to socio-political tension and conflict in a manner that is complementary to the other law and order mechanisms.

Further research on the complementary function of a peace structure is needed, including how to find a good balance between government institutions.

Composition of the peace councils

In 1992, in South Africa, all stakeholders were involved in the peace councils. In some peace structures, main representatives of different groups, clans or parties are included. In others, focus is on representation of respected religious leaders. Some argue for a balance of 'doves' and 'hawks' in a peace council: doves alone would be too soft.

Further studies on the possible composition of peace councils and the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches, would be very useful.

Impact assessments of peace structures

We need rigorous assessments of the impact of peace structures. We have some data on their success in South Africa, Ghana and Kenya, but if the infrastructures for peace approach is to be expanded substantially, more research on its impact is urgently needed. What is the best design or what are the crucial best practices?

Electoral violence

One approach could be to monitor elections in countries with existing peace structures and establish a system to study regions with and without one.

Cost-effectiveness of peace structures

What are the costs of establishing an infrastructure and what would be the costs if, without a peace infrastructure, a country collapsed or a state failed?

Authoritarian governments

Infrastructures for peace work only when governments are open for consultation and cooperation with civil society. What can be done if (authoritarian) governments are not open to cooperation and if civil society is still weak? What are potential entry-points in cases like this for working towards some peace structure? Could one of the possible approaches be to start with informal peace councils, at local and district levels?

Lessons from other infrastructures

Many sectors of society have some infrastructures with well defined policies, strategies, training and education, ministries, institutions such as hospitals and armies, etc. What can we learn from other infrastructures in the field of health, education, warfare and fire prevention among others?

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